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Solving Issues

Removing Barriers

Region 5 Conciliator Program



United States
Department of
Agriculture

PREPARED BY
Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

What is the Conciliator Program?

The Conciliator Program is an informal, expedient and confidential avenue to help employees resolve issues and barriers in the Pacific Southwest Region. Conciliators are state-of-the art intervention specialists in the area of Alternative Dispute Resolution. A conciliator facilitates settlement, resolution and understanding of employee concerns or disputes. Region Five is the first Forest Service Region to have the opportunity to establish a conciliator position.

The Conciliator reports directly to the Regional Forester, and has no reporting responsibility to Forest Supervisors or Staff Directors (including Personnel Management or the Civil Rights Staff) except to coordinate responses and resolutions when necessary. The Conciliator does, however, work and meet with the Regional Office Staffs on a regular basis.

The Conciliator's Role

The conciliator acts as an ombudsperson who is neutral and impartial, maintains confidentiality when requested, and is available to all employees in the Pacific Southwest Region.

Anonymity

Employees have the right to remain anonymous when dealing with the conciliator. Remaining anonymous, however, may restrict options or resolutions sought to a particular concern.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is strictly maintained in all cases, unless permission otherwise is obtained from the employee. Except where criminal behavior or safety to self or others is involved, all contacts will remain confidential. The conciliator takes no action on a case without an employee's permission. Resolutions are generally not written, and no formal records are kept.

Decision Making

The conciliator makes decisions for neither management nor the employee. After an appropriate inquiry has been made regarding the concern or issue and it has been determined that corrective action is needed, the conciliator makes recommendations which will enhance the relationship, effectiveness and productivity of all parties concerned.

Why does Region 5 Have a Conciliator?

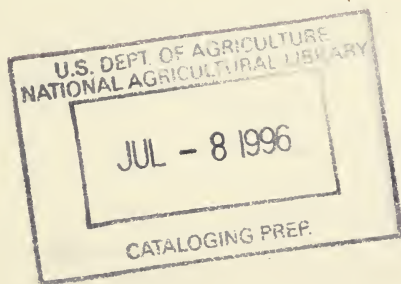
- To assist employees in early intervention in dispute resolution.
- To provide an internal resource for better communication.
- To aid in problem solving and dispute resolution.
- To recommend necessary changes in regional policies that may have an adverse impact on the Region's employees.
- To provide management unfiltered information by reporting sensitive key issues and trends, confidentially.
- To avoid litigation wherever possible.
- To coach employees to help themselves.

When to Seek Out the Conciliator

- When uncertain who to see for assistance.
- When you wish informal and early intervention or counsel.
- When you want to speak with someone confidentially.
- When you want process or regulatory information regarding a complaint or grievance, or need a referral resource.

Who Can Contact the Conciliator?

Anyone within the organization! All employees—male or female, at any grade level, including supervisors, managers, seasonals, and temporaries.





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Reaching the Conciliator

The conciliator's office is in the Regional Office, Room 802. Data General (DG) messages can be sent to ASSIST:R05A. The FTS and Commercial number is 415/705-1263, or call toll-free at 1-800-571-8832. All phone messages are confidential.

Other Sources of Help

Employee Assistance Program (CONCERN)
1-800-937-7770

Employment Dispute Resolution Office
(EEO Counseling/Mediation)
415/705-1262

R-5 Sexual Harassment/Discrimination Hotline
415/705-2984
(TDD 415/705-1169)

WO Sexual Harassment Hotline
1-800-338-3971

Regional Office, Office of Civil Rights
415/705-2653

Regional Career Counselor
415/705-1377

Regional Office, Employee/Labor Relations
415/705-1878

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